

STACKABLE MULTI-USE DISPLAY CONTAINER

The present invention is a stackable display container for consumer products which offers a 360° view of the contents so that the container may be seen and displayed at any angle. The container is usable for multiple purposes after the consumer product is removed from the packaging. Such multiple purposes include use of the container as a coin bank or a carrying case or a drinking vessel.

Background of the Invention

In point of purchase merchandising, it is often desirable to stack merchandise. Stacking conserves space and eliminates the need for shelving. Stacking allows more merchandise to be put on the selling floor, immediately available to the consumer for ultimate sale. While it can be more economical and efficient to display merchandise in stacked condition, there are problems inherent in stacking. For one thing, stacked merchandise can be toppled, which can damage or destroy the merchandise. Moreover, a toppled display must be cleaned up and set up again, which requires man hours which must be diverted from other work. It thus has been desirable to devise an apparatus which resists toppling and maintains a display in a stacked, attractive condition.

Attempts have been made to create stackable containers for display purposes. United States Patent 4,377,231 to Murphy discloses a modular tower-like structure for displaying merchandise for point of purchase sale. The tower is assembled by frictionally fitting transparent vinyl sheet material into end caps having a series of ribs spaced about the inner wall of each cap.

The end cap of one module is joined to one of another module, and the end caps are secured by locking lugs located on the outer walls of the caps.

United States Patent 4,485,923 to Schwaikert also discloses a stackable cylindrical container. The containers are stackable by virtue of mateable rings located on the top and bottom of each container.

An apparatus for stacking equal diameter cylindrical containers is also disclosed in US Patent 4,930,636 to Meadows. The invention disclosed by Meadows involves a connector for securing the containers in coaxial stacked relations including first and second cylindrical side walls which intersect at a transverse circular partition. Circular undercut grooves are provided on each of the side walls and are dimensioned to frictionally engage top and bottom peripheral rims on the containers.

The prior art, however, does not disclose stackable cylindrical containers which have several mating elements as disclosed herein that cooperate to provide a stable and secure display.

Summary of the Invention

The present invention provides an attractive stackable cylindrical container. The inventive structure makes it easy for the consumer to detach one container from the stacked articles without disrupting the remainder of the displayed and stacked articles. Moreover, the mode of connection allows for an aligned orientation of the merchandise. The top and bottom caps of the containers of the present invention interlock with each other. The top cap has a raised portion which fits into a recessed area found in the bottom cap. Moreover, channels in the top cap receive pins located in the bottom cap, thus reinforcing the connection between the two pieces and stabilizing the stacked structure. One of the embodiments of this invention also

provides a slot in the top cap which is configured to receive a tab which is located on the bottom cap.

Through the mating of these multiple elements, the containers of the present invention can be securely stacked and properly oriented to best display the contents.

The containers are equipped with various features which allow for multiple uses of the container after purchase by the consumer. For example, the container may be used as a coin bank, where the slot in the top cap can be sized to receive coins. Also, a ring provided on the top cap allows the container to be used as a carrying case. The shape of the container also lends itself to use as a drinking cup, pencil holder, or sand bucket.

Description of the Drawings

Fig. 1 is a top side perspective view of the container of the present invention.

Fig. 2 is a bottom side perspective view thereof.

Fig. 3 is a top plan view thereof.

Fig. 4 is a side elevational view thereof.

Fig. 5 is an end view thereof.

Fig. 6 is a top plan view thereof with the handle in a folded position.

Fig. 7 is a top plan view of an alternative embodiment thereof.

Fig. 8 is a bottom side perspective view of an alternative embodiment thereof.

Fig. 9 is a view of two containers in a stacked configuration.

Fig. 10 is an enlarged, fragmentary, cross-sectional view taken on lines 10-10 of Fig. 9.

Detailed Description of the Invention

Fig. 1 shows the stackable container 10, having a top cap 11. The top cap 11 has a collar 12, rounded protrusion 13, channels 14, indentations 15, coin slot 16, and movable handle 17. The top cap 11 closely fits onto the top of transparent cylinder 18 which fits into a bottom piece 20.

Figs. 2 and 8 are embodiments showing the recessed area of bottom piece 20 having pegs 21 and a tab 22. Pegs 21 may be of any suitable cross-section, such as an "x" as shown in Fig. 2 or round as shown in Fig. 8. Pegs 21 are formed to fit into indentations 14 and tab 22 into slot 16 when container 10 are stacked upon each other as shown in Figs 9 and 10.

Fig. 3 shows the small finger divot 31 in the top cap which makes lifting handle 17 easier. Figs. 4 and 5 show handle 17 in a lifted position. Fig. 6 shows handle 17 folded down into the rounded protrusion 13. Fig. 7 is an alternative embodiment having no handle 17.

As shown in Figs. 9 and 10, the containers fit together, and resist accidental toppling, by virtue of the various interlocking elements of the device. Protrusion 13 fits into the recessed portion of bottom piece 20. The connection is reinforced by the mating of pegs 21 through channels 14 into indentations 15, as well as the mating of tab 22 into coin slot 16.